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THE CONDOR

A Magazine of
Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

It is an undisputed fact that the waterfowl of California are rapidly decreasing in numbers. Even such species as the Mallard and Cinnamon Teal, which used to breed numerous in many parts of the state, occur no longer in summer in much of their former breeding range. It is of very great importance that each ornithologist in the state place on record what he has learned in regard to our native game birds. If the material is of sufficient quantity to warrant a general article in *THE CONDOR* it ought to be thus presented. But even if only a few lines can be offered, these should be sent in for publication, as a field-and-study note. Such items as the following will constitute valuable additions to our knowledge: Exact dates of nesting, numbers of eggs or young, manner of nesting, time of donning eclipse plumage in ducks, food of young and of adults, exact dates of arrival and departure in the migratory species.

Mr. A. B. Howell has undertaken the preparation of a summary of all that is known concerning the birds of the Santa Barbara Islands. This will appear in due course of time as one of the Cooper Club's *Avifauna* series. Mr. Howell invites all observers who have Island information as yet unpublished to either place it on record at once, or send in their manuscript notes to him—in either event making their knowledge available in time to be incorporated in his forthcoming treatise.

Messrs. Witherby & Company have been appointed European agents for "The Emu", the organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, and copies of that publication can now be obtained at 326, High Holborn, London.

Dr. Reuben M. Strong, of the University of Chicago, is at work upon a monograph of the anatomy of the Tubinares. Material is especially desired which is of a nature to be used in dissecting the soft anatomy of the Pacific albatrosses. Correspondents in a position to furnish such material should inform Dr. Strong of the fact.

Students of western birds will be interested to know that the United States Biological Survey is resuming its field work in Arizona. Mr. E. A. Goldman has been carrying on work there the past summer under the auspices of the Bureau; and Mr. E. W. Nelson, who is in charge of the biological investigations of the Survey, will take the field for a time this fall. We may look forward to a final report upon the fauna of Arizona, compiled along similar lines to the excellent state reports already put out for Texas, Colorado, and other western areas.

A field party from the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology returned on August 25 from three full months of zoological exploration in the coast district of California north from Marin County to the Yolla Bolly district of Trinity County. The party consisted of Mr. Walter P. Taylor, in charge, with Mr. Charles L. Camp, Mr. Alfred C. Shelton, and Mr. George Stone, of the University of California, as assistants. Mr. G. F. Ferris, of Stanford University, accompanied the expedition in the interests of Prof. V. L. Kellogg, for the purpose of gathering bird and mammal parasites. The results of the season's work, as far as now apparent, consist in a greatly increased knowledge of the distribution of the vertebrate elements in the faunal areas traversed.

Since Mr. W. P. Taylor's report in our May issue (pages 125 to 128) of accomplishments in California in the line of wild life conservation, the fortunes attending this worthy cause have been varied. For reasons neither explained, nor readily inferred, the Governor failed to sign a number of the important bills passed by the legislature. Thus out of the list of 13 items as given by Taylor, numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were lost, save that the separate bill included under number 13, providing protection for Sea Otter alone, was signed. The hotly contested no-sale and no-shipment bill was signed; but enemies of the regulation, namely the San Francisco Hotelmen's Association, have subsequently succeeded in securing the requisite number of signatures to the appropriate petitions invoking the referendum on this law. The enforcement of the measure will therefore be

postponed at least until the next general election, in November, 1914, when the people of California will be called upon to vote directly upon the issue.

Meanwhile, through the enactment of the Federal migratory bird law, California is likely to secure in no small part what it was hoped to gain through state legislation. The details of the Federal regulations have been in the hands of a most competent committee, consisting of T. S. Palmer, A. K. Fisher and W. W. Cooke, of the United States Biological Survey. The regulations as finally announced in a Circular of the Survey will go into effect October 1, 1913.

As regards California birds the following restrictions will now become operative. A five-year closed season on: Band-tailed Pigeon; all Cranes; Swans; all Rails; Curlew and all shorebirds *except* Black-bellied and Golden Plover, Wilson Snipe and both species of Yellowlegs. The open season on ducks and geese will extend from October 15 to January 16, thus cutting the shooting season much shorter at the spring end, as compared with the provisions of the State law. The open season for Black-bellied and Golden Plover, Wilson Snipe and both Yellow-legs

will be from October 15 to December 16. The Coot and Florida Gallinule will be subject to an open season from September 1 to December 1. The latter two species thus become recognized as game birds.

These federal regulations are of the utmost importance as a step toward retarding the spectacular diminution of our game resources. But we must not rest here. Much wider accomplishment is necessary, especially in the line of public education, if the stock of game birds on the Pacific Coast is to be preserved in the face of the present high rate of immigration and consequent enormously increased toll levied upon all of our natural resources.

HERBERT BROWN, one of the few resident ornithologists of Arizona, died at his home in Tucson, May 12, 1913. He was 65 years old at the time of his death, having been born in Winchester, Virginia, March 6, 1848. He was twice married and left a widow and one son.

In 1883 he located in Tucson where he made his home throughout most of the remainder of his life. During the early years of his residence in Arizona he lived a more or less adventurous life, making long pros-



Fig. 51. HERBERT BROWN, HOLDING ELF OWL; PHOTO TAKEN BY WILLIAM L. FINLEY AT TUCSON, ARIZONA, IN THE SPRING OF 1910

pecting trips into the desert mountains of southern Arizona and northern Sonora. In those days the Apaches were a constant danger in that region and Mr. Brown and his companions had a number of narrow escapes from them, as well as from death by thirst on the arid plains. Later he became interested in newspaper work in Tucson and for many years was reporter, editor or owner of various journals there, and was one of the best known and respected men among the pioneers of the community. He had the instincts of a born naturalist and was a keen observer of nature long before he gained any definite knowledge of the subject.

In 1883 I spent several months in Tucson and within a short time after my arrival met Herbert Brown. He expressed the greatest pleasure to have the opportunity to learn something about birds, saying that he had always been much interested in them but had never before met anyone who could give him any information on the subject. He soon learned to make good skins and became an enthusiastic field collector, making trips whenever he could spare a little time from confining duties. He soon came to know local birds very well and made a collection of skins which later he presented, with other scientific material, to the Museum of the University of Arizona.

He told me of having seen "Bob-White" quail on grassy plains south of Tucson during some of his early trips, and as a result of my interest in the matter he afterwards secured and sent to Mr. Ridgway the first specimen of the bird afterwards described as *Colinus ridgwayi*. Some years later while Superintendent of the prison at Yuma, he collected the type of the mountain lion frequenting the delta of the Colorado, *Felis aztecus browni* Merriam. The common name of *Melospiza melodia rivularis*—Brown's Song Sparrow of Lower California—was dedicated to him by his friend, Walter E. Bryant.

I found in Herbert Brown a warm-hearted friend and delightful companion. He enjoyed doing kindly acts for others, and so had many friends among both scientific and non-scientific men. He was curator of the Museum of the University of Arizona from the time it was founded, and, in addition, at the time of his death, he was President of the Audubon Society of Arizona and Clerk of the Superior Court of Pima County.—E. W. NELSON.

COMMUNICATION

COLLECTING IN PERU

Editor THE CONDOR:

Again calling to mind that long postponed promise to write to you, I lay aside a couple of finished lapwings, push still farther away a waiting grebe and ibis, and commence. We are in the shooting lodge of the Cerro de Pasco Mining and Railway Company, located on the "Roof of the World", to use the language of the railway folders. We are at

13,000 feet elevation here, and the snow-capped Andes just across the lake seem only small hills, as compared to the view of them from the seaward side.

Perhaps the most interesting view to us is the early morning outlook from the door. In the foreground is the flock of llamas that come to roost every evening about 100 yards from the door. Then a gentle slope of a mile to the lake, smooth as glass and with a flock of feeding flamingos on the edge; beyond that the abruptly rising mountains, capped with snow and showing clear-cut against the sky. During the day the llamas feed down to the lake, so that when snipe shooting one has to be careful that a llama is not incidentally in range. The carrying power of a charge of powder is seemingly much greater here than at sea level, for I have made some shots that I would not even have attempted below. A couple of flamingos were stopped last night from a flock that must have been from eighty to a hundred yards away. It seems somewhat odd to see flamingos standing in a pond being peppered with hail stones, but it frequently happens here. One's remembrance of wading into tropical lagoons after them, with nothing on but drawers and undershirt, fades slowly from mind when they fly past with the snow-covered hills a mile away, and a cold sleety drizzle chilling one as he sits in a boat watching them.

And the mudhens! How changed from the familiar California mudhen. The first one I shot seemed so much bigger than ours, though of the same general appearance, that I supposed I had in hand the Giant Mudhen that is listed as occurring in Peru; but some days later, while slowly rowing along an island bordered with tules, a really big mudhen rose from the edge and flew out onto the lake. It looked so big when rising and flapping on the water that I would have shot, but my wife's head being in the way, refrained, and so was compelled to row after it when it settled a half mile out on the choppy lake.

Before I got to it, though going down the wind, I was puffing worse than I used to do on the choppy sea off Point Pinos when chasing a pair of Xantus Murrelets that would persist in swimming as fast as I could make the boat travel, until I was thoroughly wind-ed, when they would turn broadside on and show a pair of shark fins in place of the coveted murrelets. But I got this mudhen, and another yesterday, and giants they are! While not as large as a *large* honker, they will certainly surpass the majority of the geese that winter in California. And tough skinned! I'd sooner skin an eagle. I skinned the first one but my cholo assistant skins any others that we get. The middle toe and claw of the one